

Boys suffer from their fathers' long working hours

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Fathers' extremely long working hours can be detrimental to their sons' wellbeing. This is the key finding of a longitudinal study by Jianghong Li (senior researcher at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center) and four Australian co-authors, published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

The [longitudinal study](#) is based on data of more than 1,400 children in Western Australia. Around 19 percent of Western Australian fathers work 55 or more hours per week when their children are 5 years of age. Almost 20 percent of Australian fathers work so long when their children are 8 years old.

Boys whose fathers worked 55 or more hours per week later exhibited more delinquent and aggressive behaviors than boys whose fathers worked fewer hours. Their fathers' long work hours did not appear to affect girls' behaviors. Mothers' work hours did not seem to matter, although few Australian mothers worked long hours and no firm conclusions can be drawn yet from this comparison.

The culture of working long hours which has crept into many jobs in the new economy should be the next policy frontier. In Germany 15 percent of fathers of children with similar age (3-4) work 55 or more hours per week in 2011.

The data come from the [cohort study](#) called "Western Australian Pregnancy Cohort Study" well-known under the name Raine Study. The Study has been following children from pregnancy to [adulthood](#).

More information: Johnson, S. et al. Mothers' and Fathers' Work Hours, Child Gender and Behavior in Middle Childhood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 2013, 75: 56-74.

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